

Action Item

*Governmental Relations Committee*

Approval of the Minutes of the October 16, 2000, Meeting

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# MINUTES

## *Governmental Relations Committee*

### Meeting of October 16, 2000

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**Committee members present** Lance Izumi, *Vice Chair*  
Carol Chandler  
Evonne Seron Schulze  
Kyhl Smeby  
Howard Welinsky  
Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr., *ex officio*  
Alan S. Arkatov, *ex officio*

**Other Commissioners present**  
Robert A. Hanff  
Kyo “Paul” Jhin  
Velma Montoya  
Ralph Pesqueira

**Committee member absent** Monica Lozano  
Melinda G. Wilson

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**Call to order** Committee Vice Chair Izumi called the meeting of June 12, 2000 Governmental Relations Committee to order at 9:10 a.m. at the California State University, Fresno, Smittcamp Alumni House, The Board of Directors/Whitten Conference Room, 2635 E. Keats, Fresno, California.

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**Approval of the minutes** Vice Chair Izumi asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the committee meeting on August 21, 2000. A motion was so made and the committee voted without dissent to approve the minutes as submitted.

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**State legislative year-end report** Vice Chair Izumi called upon staff member Marge Chisholm to present the Legislative Year-end Report.

Ms. Chisholm reported briefly on the recently passed, important student financial aid legislation, and on the two pending statewide November ballot propositions – Propositions 38 and 39 – that could affect education. She said commissioners had been provided an updated matrix of legislation (see Appendix A). She said it contained information, including some veto messages from the Governor, that had not been available when the Commission agenda had been published.

Ms. Chisholm reviewed the Legislature’s pending schedule. She reported that eight of the 35 higher education bills tracked by the Commission this year had made it through the legislative process and received the Governor’s signature. She said it had been a

successful legislative year for the Commission with the passage of two bills, AB 1570 and AB 1123. A brief review of those and other bills was provided.

There was general discussion about the Commission's ability to take a position on a pending proposition. It was pointed out that the Commission had taken a position in the past on pending ballot measures.

Chair Rodriguez asked the executive director to respond. Director Fox cited a pending State Attorney General opinion that will address whether public agencies are permitted to take a position on ballot propositions. It was suggested that, in the absence of an AG opinion prohibiting such an action, the Commission should move ahead. If a negative decision was later issued, the motion could be withdrawn.

Chair Rodriguez said that, given past Commission concern with expanding the capacity of public educational facilities, it would be consistent for the Commission to take a position of support for the intention of Proposition 39, the school bond measure.

Commissioner Schulze moved that Commission take a position of support for Proposition 39. The motion was seconded. During discussion, concern was expressed that such a Commission action had not received public notice.

Chair Rodriguez asked if the motion could be amended to support the intent of Proposition 39. He said this would give the Commission more leeway in regard to the issue of providing public notice. Commissioner Schulze concurred in the amendment to her motion. Committee Vice Chair Izumi expressed concern about the manner of school construction financing set forth in Proposition 39.

The vote was called on the motion, as amended. Commissioner Izumi voted against the motion; Commissioners Chandler, Schulze, Smeby, Welinsky, Rodriguez, and Arkatov affirmed it.

Ms. Chisholm commented that some related legislation had already been passed that does not go into effect unless Proposition 39 is passed. She said there had been discussion about whether passage might also make the statutory provisions easier to remove due to a lessening of the voting majority required for such measures.

Chair Rodriguez asked how successful the Commission had been during the last legislative session in seeing bills passed that it either sponsored or supported. Ms. Chisholm said the Commission had been very successful. She said that success was especially hard-won given the number of new legislators and staff who required extensive background briefing and assistance.

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**Federal update,  
October 2000**

Commission staff member Karl Engelbach reported that the federal budget had yet to be passed. The third continuing resolution is in force until October 20, 2000. He reported on a number of other issues, including the following:

- ◆ California has received 11 new GEAR UP partnership grants;
- ◆ The federal Web-based Commission, of which Vice Chair Arkatov is a member, will issue a report in the coming months;

- ♦ Congress has made little progress on Elementary and Secondary Education Act which, among other programs, funds the Eisenhower Program;
- ♦ The U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether public agencies and institutions are shielded from the Americans with Disabilities Act; and
- ♦ Default rates in the Federal Family Student Loan Program are at the lowest recorded levels.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked about the proposed funding level for the Eisenhower Program. Mr. Engelbach said it would be \$435 million, a 30-percent increase, if passed.

Christopher Cabaldon, representing the California Community Colleges, pointed to the “tuition sensitivity” feature of the proposed increase in the federal Pell Grant levels. He said the result would be that students attending the California Community Colleges would receive only half the increase that would be made available to students at other institutions. He said an effort is underway to garner support for a change in this provision. There was a general discussion about this issue and commissioners asked for a more detailed briefing at the December meeting.

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**Adjournment**    Having no further business, Vice Chair Izumi adjourned the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

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# Appendix A

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